

Glyceria fluitans

COMMON NAMES

floating sweetgrass

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Aquatic perennial emergent grass found on the margins of freshwaters on damp ground and swamps. It is characterised by its bright green leaf blades, and ability to form loose floating mats in shallow water.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial marginal aquatic grass, loosely tufted or forming loose masses in shallow water. **Culm** (20–)45–75 cm, erect or spreading, sometimes prostrate or floating at base. **Leaf-blade** bright green 10–23 cm, folded at first then becoming flat. **Panicle** (20–)30–55 cm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Very similar to *Glyceria declinata*. These two species can be distinguished when flowering as *G. declinata* has 3–5 distinct teeth on the lemma apex and the palea teeth exceed the lemma apex. *G. fluitans* has a rounded lemma and the palea does not exceed the lemma. *G. maxima* is a taller species, which has a distinct pointed ligule.

DISTRIBUTION

Throughout New Zealand.

HABITAT

Aquatic in drains and other slow flowing waterbodies. Damp ground in swamps and pastures, drains and river banks.

GENUS

Glyceria

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Glyceria fluitans (L.) R.Br.

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

Spring–summer.

FRUITING

Late spring–autumn

YEAR NATURALISED

1872



ORIGIN

Europe and North America.

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Pasture species, or contamination of other grass seed

TOLERANCES

Tolerant of very damp ground, physical damage, grazing, cold temperatures, and high nutrient levels. Intolerant of shade.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Perennial. Seed and vegetative fragment spread by water movement. Reproduces by seed and rhizomes. Each flower head consists of an open panicle with 20–30 spikelets containing many seeds.

Seed and stem fragments spread within catchment via water flow. Contaminated diggers, livestock, soil movement, dumped vegetation, eel nets boats and trailers all spread seed and rhizomes into new catchments.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

glyceria: From the Greek glykos 'sweet'.

fluitans: From the Greek fluito (floating)

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

NVS CODE

GLYFLU

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Coffey BT, Clayton JS. 1988. New Zealand water plants: a guide to plants found in New Zealand freshwaters. Ruakura Agricultural Centre, Hamilton, NZ. 65 p.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA. 1989. Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington, NZ. 319 p.

Champion P, James T, Popay I, Ford K. 2012. An illustrated guide to common grasses, sedges and rushes of New Zealand. NZ Plant Protection Society Inc, Christchurch, NZ. 182 p.

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/glyceria-fluitans/>

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